

**HANDOUT 4.3 — STEPS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

1. Identify the causes of conflict:
  - Use active listening. One of the biggest causes of conflict is that people do not listen to each other. Establish eye contact, and don't interrupt. We are not only showing respect when we listen, we're finding out information that can help us resolve the conflict. (See PRA module for active listening exercises.)
  - Ask questions that reveal a willingness to understand, such as "What is it about the situation that bothers you?" "What is it you really care about?" (See PRA Module)
  - Don't be confrontational. Don't shout, insult or hit the other person. Try to be objective and calm.
  - Express your own concerns, and try to keep your emotions out of it.
  - Stick to the issues; don't try to second-guess the other party's motives.
  - Stick to the present: try not to dredge up unnecessary things from the past.
  - Take responsibility for your role in the conflict.
2. Create an effective atmosphere, use a neutral venue and set times to suit all parties.
3. Clarify your perceptions, identify possible labels and look for positive potential in others.
4. Generate options - do not enter the conflict with a solution already in mind. Try to look for alternative options.
5. Focus on the problem, not on defeating the other party. Look for individual and shared needs and concerns and find common ground.
6. Build shared positive power, do not play games or use emotional blackmail. Give all parties a chance to make a meaningful contribution.
7. Focus on outcomes where both parties are satisfied. Look for win-win solutions where there is a high level of satisfaction for all parties.
8. THE MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IN CONFLICT OCCURS WHEN BOTH PARTIES BEGIN TO SEE THE CONFLICT AS A PROBLEM FOR BOTH OF THEM (OUR PROBLEM).
9. Look at the long-term picture when deciding on outcomes.
10. Develop an action plan to resolve issues.
11. Third-party Intervention - sometimes it is necessary to bring in a third party to assist in the collaboration process.

Source: Hinkey, L. and Engleby, Laura (instructors/editors). 2002. Navigating in Rough Seas: Public Policy Issues and Conflict Management. NOAA Coastal Services Center.